

THE WILSON BULLETIN

Published at Sioux City, Iowa, by the Wilson Ornithological Club.

The present editorial organization is as follows: T. C. Stephens, Editor-in-Chief, Sioux City, Iowa; Myron H. Swenk, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska; Albert F. Ganier, Nashville, Tennessee; Alfred M. Bailey, Chicago Academy of Sciences, Chicago, Illinois; R. D. Hissong, Sioux City, Iowa.

The subscription price in the United States is \$1.50 a year, and 50 cents a number; in all other countries of the International Postal Union the price is \$2.00 a year, and 60 cents a number. Subscriptions and orders for single copies should be addressed to the Secretary, Dr. Jesse M. Shaver, Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee, U. S. A.

EDITORIAL

THROUGH SOME INCIDENT, now forgotten, we were led to speculate on the selection of the ten "best" bird books for the private library of an American amateur ornithologist. Just what is meant by the term "best" we may have to leave undefined. It does not mean most scientific, for often the most scientific papers are of the least use to the average bird student. It does not mean most useful, for sometimes the bird student reads for pleasure as well as for instruction—at least he may wish to enjoy his reading. And yet, we are selecting the books for the serious student of ornithology, and will overlook the works of the literary interpreters of nature. What we probably want is a small collection of bird books that will give the maximum amount of information about birds, and the maximum amount of pleasure in reading it.

In selecting such a list of books we have found it necessary to establish certain criteria—to make a sort of score card. After considerable alteration and elimination we have settled on five points, or qualifications, upon which to score the books. 1. Authoritativeness. The author must have professional standing in order to assure confidence in his statements. 2. Readability. So many books are poorly written, and so many are well written, that we may as well choose on this score. 3. Availability. We should not select for this purpose books that sell at a high price, nor out-of-print books that can not be easily obtained. 4. Variety. The ten books chosen should cover as many phases or branches of ornithology as possible, and avoid duplication of authors. 5. Utility. This is a relative term, and might not mean the same to every individual. Nevertheless, each from his own standpoint must consider the value on this point.

The writer's judgment may be in error, and he may be unacquainted with better books for such a list; but such as it is, here is the list:

1. Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America. By Frank M. Chapman. For classification and description.
2. A Popular Handbook of the Birds of the United States and Canada. By Thomas Nuttall. For description of habits, especially of song. Rather expensive in the original, but a cheaper reprint in one volume is obtainable.
3. Michigan Bird Life. By Walter B. Barrows. For general information and because of low cost. There are several other equally good state books, but this one is selected because of the centrality of the region treated.
4. Territory in Bird Life. By H. Eliot Howard. Bird life is here interpreted from a new angle, which will be enlightening to the average student of birds. It is also an interesting example of logical thinking.

5. The Practical Value of Birds. By Junius Henderson. As a treatise on economic ornithology. It is difficult to choose between this and Forbush's "Useful Birds and Their Protection."
6. The Migrations of Birds. By Alexander Wetmore. As an account of this important habit of birds.
7. Home Life of Wild Birds. By Francis H. Herrick. For information on the domestic habits of birds.
8. Birds and Their Attributes. By Glover M. Allen. As a general discussion of birds and their habits.
9. Game Birds, Wild Fowl and Shore Birds. By Edward Howe Forbush. Besides giving information on many of the wild fowl and game birds, this book gives a history of the most important extinct species and an excellent exposition of the principles of bird conservation.
10. The A. O. U. Check-List. If the new edition of the Check-List is not published within the next five or six years we may have to strike it from the list. But when published it will be quite essential to every student of birds in this country.

Of course, everyone can suggest changes in this list. And there are various state publications, government publications, and periodicals which everyone should have. There should be a history of ornithological science in such a list: but unfortunately there is none in English.

Our readers will observe that this issue of the BULLETIN contains an extra eight pages. This is made possible by contributions from two authors amounting to about forty-five dollars.

It is desired to compile a list of wild fruits and seeds which are eaten by native birds. Any readers who have some random notes which they will wish to put into a common pool will greatly oblige by sending to the Editor the data, including the name of the plant (seed, berry, fruit, etc.), name of bird, place, date, and name of observer. Such data should be repeated as many times as different observations were made, even for the same species of bird.

Senator McNary has introduced Senate Bill 2015 which provides for a reduction in the bag-limit on game birds. The daily limit provided for ducks is fifteen, and for geese, four. Other game birds are reduced proportionately. Representative Haugen will introduce the Bill in the House.

Those who wish to have a room at the Headquarters Hotel should secure a reservation at least a week or ten days in advance of the meeting. The Des Moines Audubon Society will hold the annual bird census on Thursday, the 26th. They invite visitors to the W. O. C. meeting to come a day earlier and attend the field trip. Notify Mrs. J. E. Stewart, 1245 37th Street, Des Moines, Iowa.

THE DES MOINES MEETING

The Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club will convene in Des Moines., Iowa, December 27-28, 1929, in conjunction with the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The reading of papers will form a prominent feature of the meetings. All members are earnestly requested to contribute, and to notify the Secretary as to the titles of their communications, the length of time required for their presentation, and whether they will be illustrated by lantern slides or films, in order that complete arrangements may be made. Meetings will be held in the Lecture Room of the City Library, (three blocks from our hotel headquarters) from 9:00 A. M. until 5:00 P. M.

The Des Moines Audubon Society has arranged an excellent exhibition of bird paintings at the library for this meeting. The Brown Marine Museum, at the Brown Hotel, two blocks from Savery Hotel, invites all members to visit this museum and examine the Marine exhibits. These include water and shore birds. The annual banquet of the Wilson Club will be held at Younker's Tea Room, Saturday evening, December 28, 1929.

The headquarters of the Wilson Club will be at Hotel Savery III, where rooms may be secured at the following rates:

Single rooms with bath, \$2.50, \$3.00, \$3.50, \$4.00, or \$5.00 per day. Single rooms with bath and double bed, \$4.00, \$4.50, \$5.00, \$5.50, or \$6.00 per day. Rooms with bath and twin beds, \$5.00 or \$6.00 per day. Reservations should be made well in advance.

SPECIAL RAILROAD RATES

A special railroad rate is made to all members of organizations affiliated with the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Since the Wilson Club is thus affiliated, this special rate applies to its members. To secure this special rate, purchase a one-way ticket to Des Moines, Iowa, and secure from the agent a certificate to the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Do not purchase a ticket without securing this certificate. This certificate must be presented to the proper official at the convention for validation. After validation, the certificate entitles its holder to a return ticket at one-half the regular rate.

Each member is requested to recommend to the Secretary the name of at least one new member for election to the Wilson Club.

JESSE M. SHAVER, *Secretary*.

GEORGE PEABODY COLLEGE FOR TEACHERS,
NASHVILLE, TENN., OCTOBER 28, 1929.